

Memo

To: McHenry County Hospitals, Healthcare Providers, and Infection Preventionists

From: Mary Lou Ludicky, RN, MPH Susan Karras, BSN, RN
Communicable Disease Coordinator Communicable Disease Investigator

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Re: Ebola Virus Case Identification and Infection Control Guidelines

The World Health Organization has declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa to be an international public health emergency that will require an extraordinary response to stop its spread.

Since Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) was first identified in 1976, there have been more than 20 outbreaks in central and eastern Africa; the current outbreak is the largest and longest outbreak of Ebola and the first one to affect West Africa (Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone).

Ebola virus is the cause of a viral hemorrhagic fever disease. Symptoms include: fever, headache, joint and muscle aches, weakness, diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, lack of appetite, and abnormal bleeding. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to the ebola virus though 8-10 days is most common.

Ebola is transmitted through direct contact with the blood or bodily fluids of an infected symptomatic person. Asymptomatic individuals are not contagious. Therefore, in order for the virus to be transmitted, an individual would have to have direct contact with an individual who is experiencing symptoms.

Early recognition is critical for infection control. Healthcare providers should be alert and triage any patients suspected of having EVD by the following clinical symptoms and risk factors;

➤ **Clinical criteria:**

- Fever of greater than 38.6 degrees Celsius or 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit, and additional symptoms such as severe headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, or unexplained hemorrhage;

➤ **AND Epidemiologic risk factors (within the past 3 weeks before the onset of symptoms):**

- Contact with blood or other body fluids of a patient known to have or suspected to have EVD;
- or Residence in—or travel to—an area where EVD transmission is active (West Africa: Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone) ;
- or direct handling of bats, rodents, or primates from disease-endemic areas.

If a patient has been identified as a suspect case, by the above criteria, immediately place patient in contact and droplet isolation and call the McHenry County Department of Health (MCDH) at 815-334-4500, 24 hours a day 7 days a week, for further testing guidelines.

Refer to the following link at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on more specific infection prevention and control recommendations for hospitalized patients with known or suspected Ebola Hemorrhagic Fever in U.S. hospitals;
<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/infection-prevention-and-control-recommendations.html>.